Vol. XV
Spring 2018

CALLIOPE

The Student Journal of Art and Literature

Calliope

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Volume XV - Spring 2018

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Submissions are welcomed from September through December each year at Calliope@nvcc.edu. Submission guidelines are available at http://www.nvcc.edu/calliope. Calliope reserves the right to reprint and present submitted works on the Calliope website and other media. Students interested in joining the Calliope staff as interns should contact the editors at the address above.

calliope *kal<e>i:opi. U.S. (Gr. Kallioph)*

(beautiful-voiced), the ninth of the Muses,
presiding over eloquence and heroic poetry.

1. An instrument consisting of a series of
steam-whistles toned to produce musical notes,
played by a keyboard like that of an organ;

2. attrib. calliope hummingbird,
a hummingbird, sellula ***calliope***, of the
Western United States and Mexico.
Oxford English Dictionary

Calliope First Prize 2018 - Artwork

Courtney Jessica Thompson

NOW

Computer Drawing

Calliope First Prize 2018 - Poetry

Hope Bachman

Mingo County, West Virginia, 1997

The whole place stank.

I was supposed to help;

The claustrophobic basement,
its mildewed ceiling sagging,

To serve you

Stank.

By making your home

The yard strewn with trash
and garbage and waste

Warmer,

Broken glass and rotting food

Safer,

Stank.

Drier;

The inside of the house

By accepting you

Unwashed bodies

Right where you are,

Unwashed clothes

Just as you are;

Unwashed dishes

To love you like Christ would:

Unwashed floors

Without judgment.

Unwashed sinks

That week,

Unwashed toilet

I couldn't do it.

Stank.

I couldn't love you.

The roof we were repairing
stank

I helped you because of empty reasons;

Of tar.

*Because, with my peers, I'd promised
our congregation*

The sweet friendly filthy
little boy who lived there
noticed it was hot on the roof

That we'd do good work

Set a fan up in the gable window
to keep us cool

For a family in need.

Blew the stink right in our faces.

I kept you at arms' length.

Coming back to the school where
we slept after work every day

I raged hollow against the concept of poverty.

I couldn't wait to wash
the stink off my skin

But you were just as conceptual.

Get it out of my hair

I never met you,

But it stayed in my nose

Or your eyes.

Twenty years later

I couldn't see you as fully human

The retched reek

Through the cartoon odor lines.

Of third-world America.

Calliope Second Prize 2018 - Artwork

Caleb Sica

Weary Traveller

Photograph

Calliope Second Prize 2018 - Poetry

Emily Hedgecock

Natural Disaster

i am a raindrop and you
are a Hurricane, gale
force winds blowing palm
trees to their knees, your
servants, and i am a snow
flake and you are a Blizzard,
silent and all-encompassing,
a blend of nothingness and
Everything
and i am an aftershock to
your Earthquake, a reminder
of the change you wrought,
the fault lines you made
tremble at your passing, their
lord, their master, my love

you are Lightning, Tornado,
Category 9, Deluge worthy
of an ark

and i am a storm chaser,
joyous in your wake, watching
your rebirth and whispering
"wow"

Calliope First Prize 2018- Nonfiction

Fang Rong

Writing from the Depths of the Soul

Ever since my childhood, I wanted to be a teacher of Chinese literature. However, I couldn't always stick to my dream because from time to time, I felt frustrated in my Chinese writing classes. It was like the Milky Way, separating me from my dream. Luckily, I met Mr. Li in middle school. He taught me the core of writing and prevented me from giving up on my dream.

Until then, writing had been a big headache for me. Every time I was in my Chinese class, I always sat at the very front of the classroom, listening attentively to my teacher, and taking down every note as he talked about writing rules. Every time I was assigned a writing task, I carefully reviewed the rules first, then started working on an attractive beginning, a powerful ending, and an enlarged body. Unfortunately, no matter how hard I worked on it, I could only produce a mundane and tedious composition. I hated to read it and so did my teacher. I never got a score higher than a C. Gradually, I lost my interest in writing. I thought I wasn't gifted enough to be a Chinese teacher. Instead of listening to teacher's lectures, I'd rather do math or English homework under the table.

It was not surprising when our writing class was assigned to Mr. Li, it didn't light even the tiniest spark of interest in my heart. What would happen? Nothing! New changes to the class? Impossible! Mr. Li was an old teacher, working for our school for over thirty years. He was famous among students for being very strict and boring in class. I wasn't expecting anything new from him or his lectures, and I was not disappointed at that. I could never make a leap forward in my writing. Sitting in the classroom, looking at Mr. Li's mouth opening and closing, his voice echoed in my ears as he lectured, but I never listened. His voice was gentle and calm, yet monotonous, like a peaceful stream. There was no wave, torrent, or swirl in that stream. It just flowed, flowed, and flowed. Slowly I saw my soul fly out of me into the air, waving goodbye to my beloved lectern and beloved students. Farewell, my dream, I said quietly in my heart.

Days went on like that to the end of that semester when we received our final assignment. One Tuesday, Mr. Li wrote ten topics on the Blackboard and let us copy these down on our notebooks. He said, "This is your homework for this week. Choose the one you're most interested in and hand in your paper next Tuesday." I wrote them down, threw the notebook into my schoolbag and went home. I didn't take it out until Monday night. Looking at my list of topics: My Mother, boring! My Dream, gone! My eyes scanned down and stopped at the topic of loneliness.

Loneliness, yes, when you are alone you feel lonely. Sometimes you feel even more lonely when you are not alone, even when you are sitting among your friends or family. It was simply my body that was surrounded by them instead of my soul. My soul was weeping alone in the crowded room for there was always some feeling I wouldn't, and

I couldn't, share with them. Like Ziqing Zhu, a prominent Essayist and thinker in China wrote in his masterpiece, "Moonlight Over the Lotus Pond," "this animation was theirs alone. I had no part in it."

When I thought of this, a strong feeling of solitude hit me, brought me to tears and all those sad struggles with my writing came flooding back to me. Through my weeping eyes, I saw in the crowded classroom, a lonely me listening so attentively to the teacher, but in vain; a lonely me trying so hard to memorize those rules, but in vain; a lonely me revising my drafts again and again, but in vain. The dazzling red C dizzied me. I saw a lonely me standing by the blackboard at the back end of the classroom, reading the good essays that the teacher selected and posted on blackboard with envy and admiration. Why not me? Why couldn't it be me? In that classroom full of happy peals of laughter and cheery voices, I saw a lonely me weeping goodbye to my small dream.

With tears in my eyes, I took out a piece of paper, onto which words began to flow under my pen. Go to hell, rules. This time I wouldn't write under the control of the rules, I just wanted to write with my soul. Bright moonlight gently shone onto my table. My long depressed feelings burst out of my mind, like a dormant volcano erupting suddenly. Word after word sprang from me with fluidity. It seemed like nothing in the world could stop my pen from writing on and on. When I finished, it was already midnight. I breathed out a sigh of relief. Although I was exhausted, I was more than happy to let out my depressed feelings.

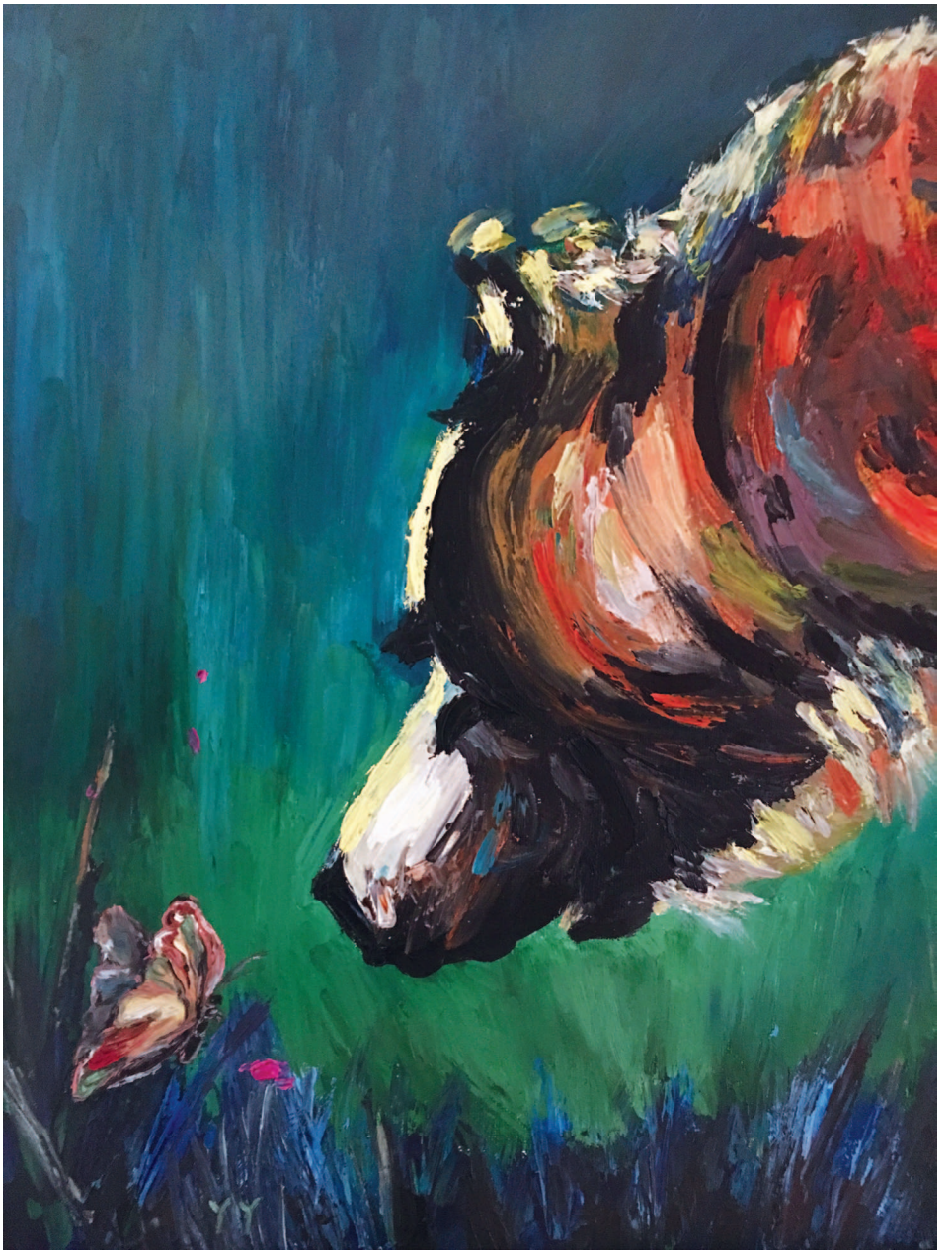
On Tuesday morning, I handed in my paper with other students and the following days went on as they always had; then something unusual happened. Everybody else got his or her paper back next Tuesday, but not me. I was ready for any criticism from Mr. Li for violating the writing rules. When he entered the classroom, he looked even more serious and boring than before. He slowly walked onto the dais and put his bag and piles of paper down on the teacher's lectern. He knocked on the blackboard to draw our attention and then said with a mild smile: "Boys and girls, I have read all of your papers and one of them touched me deeply. It is entitled Loneliness by Miss Rong. I have posted it on the Blackboard. Please read it after class. This is a very good example of prose. It was written from the depths of her soul. That is the core of writing." At that moment, I couldn't believe my ears. I felt as if I was standing at top of the whole world.

I was amazed at how lucky I was to have met Mr. Li because if it weren't for him, I would have given up on my dream. Now, standing on the dais, speaking confidently to my students about how to compose an essay, I can always see the serious and boring face of Mr. Li with a small smile stretched across his lips. I can always hear his peaceful voice saying, "That was the core of writing." I can't help thinking: what if I hadn't met him? What if he hadn't assigned me such an assignment? What if he had scolded me seriously for violating the rules? What if he hadn't given the compliments? What would have happened to me? Would I still be the same me? Despite all of those wonders, I'll always keep this unforgettable experience in my mind, which tells me that if you want to touch the readers, your writing must come from the depths of the soul.

Calliope Third Prize 2018 - Artwork

Ya Ye

When We First Met



Oil Painting

Calliope Third Prize 2018 - Poetry

Lina Abdul-Samad

America Wears Hijab

America wears hijab and walks into her daughter's kindergarten class.

"Your mom is ugly."

America is twelve and wears hijab to middle school/America begs her parents to be homeschooled/

America "is too pretty to be covered."

White men always ask where is she from before they ask for her name.
America cannot answer.

America was born to women with erased last names.

America wears hijab and works at Wendy's/ at Walmart/ mouth swollen with every accent/

America is asked when she will take it off.

sometimes foreigners pull it off for her.

America is killed/her hijab is a blanket/or a mop/ drinks her blood/ CNN claims it was over a parking dispute/ spends 30 minutes giving parking advice.

America is tired and takes off her hijab at night.

Wonders if she should put it on in the morning.

America sits behind closed doors.
sometimes they creak open

and a hand emerges in the dark

always reaching for her head.

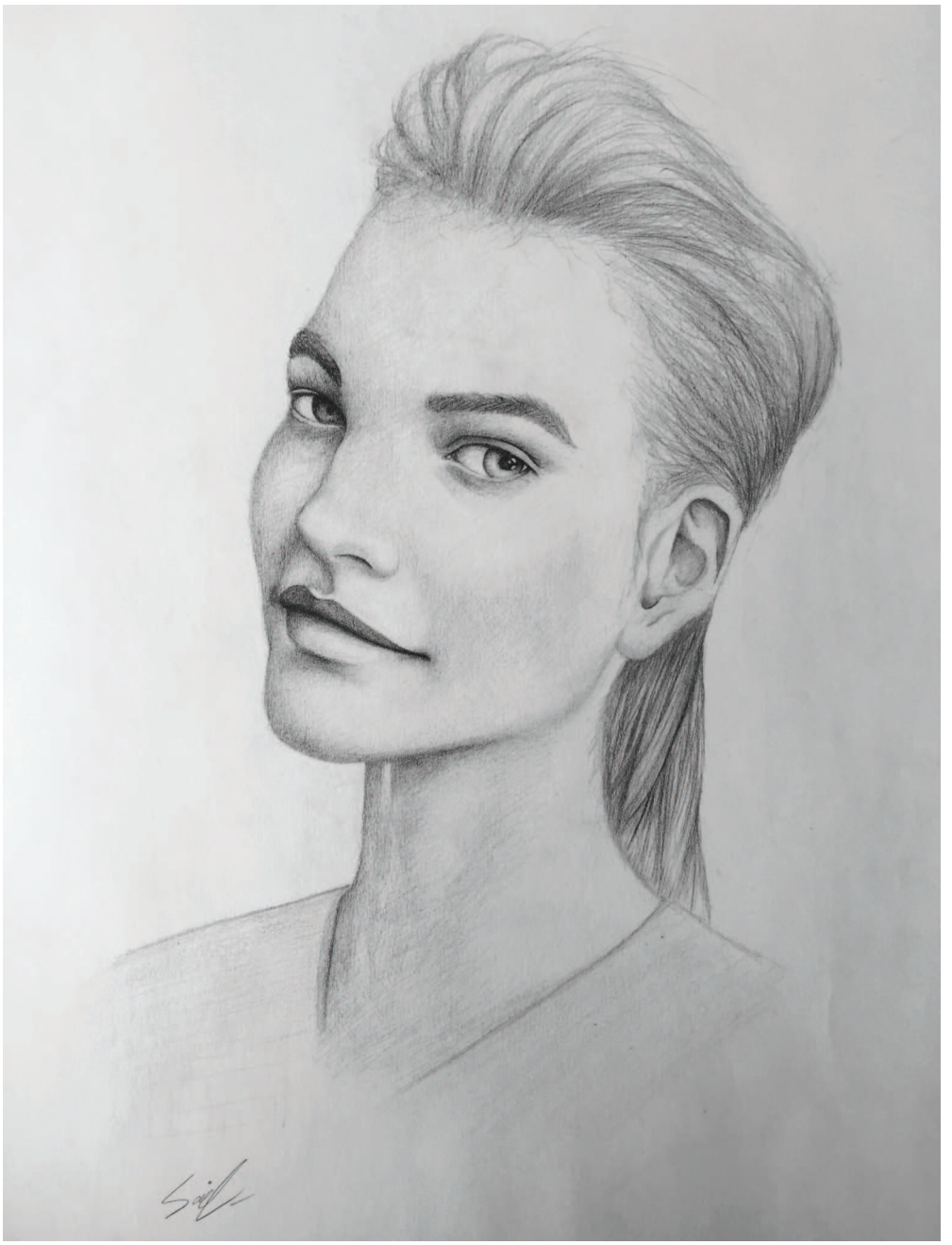
Angelica Botero

Reading the Stars

Quilled Paper Art

Muhammad Saifran Noor

Barbara Palvin



Pencil

Calliope First Prize 2018 - ESL Prose

Irina Swing

Hemingway and Me

A soft light is entering the room from a big window. I am sitting in front of two people who are interviewing me. An older professor with gray hair and kind blue eyes who is gazing at me though horn-rimmed glasses and a serious middle-age blonde woman in a tweed business suit are showering me with questions to determine if I qualify for an extremely competitive Physician Assistant Program. The questions are following one by one. I am not nervous. I am calm. I am confident. I am ready to share my answers, my life experiences, my personal story.

I was a medical doctor and a single mom living with my teenage daughter in a small old apartment in the huge industrial polluted city of Voronezh in the central part of Russia. The Soviet Union had already collapsed. My hopes and expectations that my life and the whole country would have changed for the better had not come true. I was worried about the future my daughter and I would face in a deteriorating Russia. I had a dream to change our lives and move to another country. However, I soon realized that without English language we probably could not accomplish our goal.

We signed up at an English school together. We were a strange couple: a young cheerful girl with a funny blonde ponytail, and a perpetually tired, anxious middle-age mother with her former bitter life experiences. My daughter was accepted in an advanced class and I was so brave to attend an intermediate class trying to save time and money. It soon became clear that the study was easy for my daughter and a torture for me. I struggled with English articles and English irregular verbs. I did not understand English idioms and English phrasal verbs. But the worst was ahead of me.

My first midterm task was a reading assignment. My choice was not limited at all and I was able to select the author and the book of my choosing. I picked up O'Henry because I loved his short stories in Russian which were filled with humor and unexpected turns. Also, I was familiar with most of his plots. However, I soon realized this was a poor choice. My favorite stories in Russian sounded ponderous in English and were full of bulky contractions of unknown words. I had to look up almost every word in the dictionary and I completely lost the meaning of the reading. I was ready to give up. I hated both the English language and myself. My dream about moving to another country was growing dark.

I shared my concern with my daughter and her big blue eyes opened wide with surprise. "Mom," her voice sounded softly, "Please don't give up. You are just reading the wrong author." I reacted with disbelief. What does a young naïve girl know about this? She gave me a small thin book with a modest title " The Old Man and The Sea." I knew of the author Ernest Hemingway, but I had not read any of his books. I opened the first page, and this is what it said: "He was an old man, who fished alone in a skiff in the Gulf Stream and he had gone eighty-four days now without taking a fish." It was so simple and understandable, so I felt like a blind person who suddenly regained her

sight. I fell in love with Hemingway's economy of words, his short sentences with direct meanings. I read this book in one sitting. That old Cuban fisherman Santiago was not alone anymore. I was with him in his relentless battle with a giant marlin somewhere in the Gulf Stream of the Atlantic Ocean.

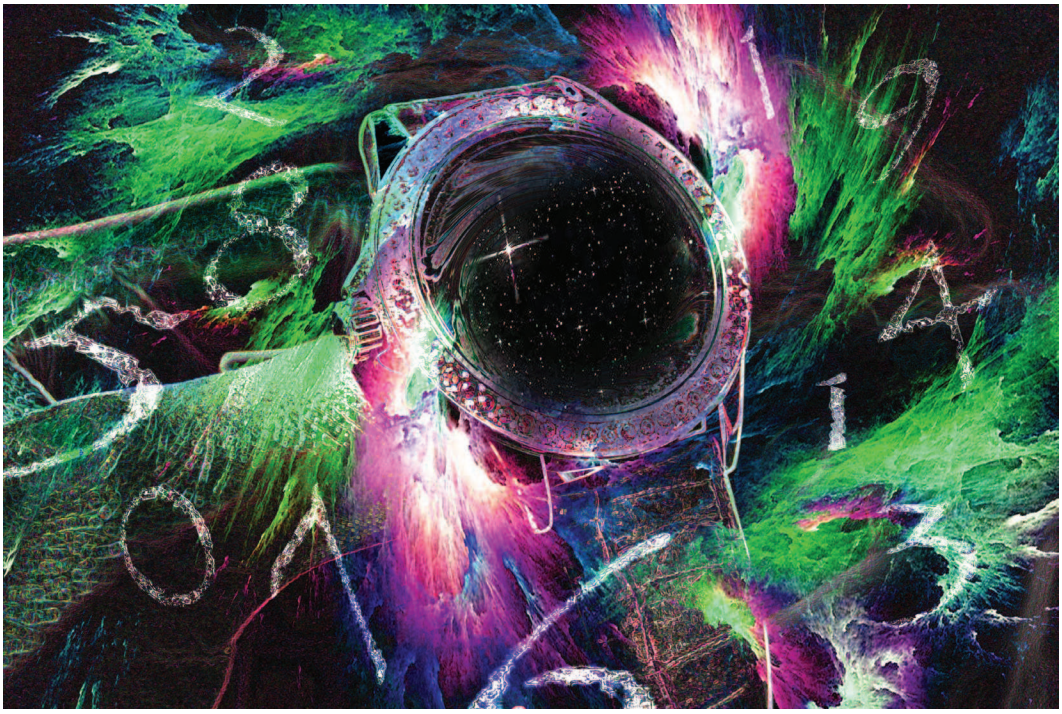
It is probably not necessary to add that I completed the midterm task and then successfully graduated from the English school. I went on to read many other books of Hemingway. However, the first book "The Old Man and The Sea" has always been my favorite one.

Now I am sitting in front of two people who are interviewing me for the Physician Assistant Program. I am calm. I am confident. I am telling my story using my favorite simple Hemingway's style. I am speaking with an accent, but I know that my answers are understood and appreciated by other people despite my perceived weaknesses.

Two weeks later after the interview I received a notice that I was accepted into the Physician Assistant program. I was one of only fifty-six students to be accepted among over one thousand five hundred applicants. This is my most empowering moment. I finally caught my blue marlin after many years of fishing.

William Appiah

Surrealism



Computer Design

Calliope First Prize 2018 - Fiction

Jiwoo Han

Media Nocte

Aequor Nocte

At
The Sea
Black Night
Consumes the Shore
And the Tyranny of the Dark
Sea would Roar a vociferous hiss.
Should come a vulnerable intruder,
The Sinner, to Adulterate the Solemn
Stillness, comes Naked before Abyss
As Bare as a wriggling Newborn
And the Divine Silence opens
Its Mouth wide Agape to
reveal its vast Black
Void, Ere the
Eternal
End

Aequor Aurora

Sun
May Rise o'er the
Night's solemn Dominion, its Black
Pits of Chaos, and should it draw its Fiery Blood
Upon the Dark face of the Sea, as the Belligerent Beacon
That which calls to Revolt the Crown, the Sanguine Heaven
Shall Seize the Promised, Pledged to Them in Birth by the Divinity.
When the Usurped Crown bitterly Retreats to whence it had been before,
The Rings of burnt Iron disturbs the Reign,
And whispers shall overcome
The Grand Eviction of the King,
When the Brief-lived Crown is robbed of its Providence in which it dwelt
Without Power It shall Stand High above All in existence, blinding
All that which dares to glare at the Lost King's burning eyes
so that they would see no more, and in vast eternity,
befalling them again to the Crude Tyranny in
Which All shall again be lost in Nocte
until the Sun rises above once
more ere the Night's
End

Part One: Media Nocte

Not one person was to be seen at the sea shore at dawn. In the grey sky, pale stars stood on guard around the white moon. This was the moment when nature sang its overwhelming harmony, created by the caressing touch of the wind upon the sea's surface: the orchestra of the ocean, with sands its percussion, waves its strings and the light breeze its elegant flute. It's melody, similar but different at each moment, was a simple yet mesmerizing chorus. Nothing dated to repel against its divine rule.

The united voice of the sea reigned over the shore.

Slowly the red sun with yet premature, bloody light rose above the horizon, staining everything in scarlet. It was then that, one by one, people started to gather at the seashore to watch the sun rise. They greeted one another as if friends of old, taking their seats upon dry sand that was yet to be touched by the waves. Some held the other's hands, some embraced the other in their arms to rest. All of them had been strangers but a week past, when all others had left.

Since then, this gathering by the shore became almost a ritual that people attended every morning, a small comfort within their decaying lives.

The first day was of grief. *How did it come to this?*, they asked, a*nd how shall it end?--*

No answer came.

The second was of anguish. *What do we do?, what do we do?* They asked.

No answer came.

The next few days, they learned that there would be no answers to their questions. So they just sat and listened to the sea without hearing; Gazing at the sun's emergence without seeing. This somehow made them believe that they were here to quietly enjoy the harmony of the beach. They never ceased talking, however.

Now, they whispered to each other, sharing private matters of love, family, and feud, careful not to disturb the grand marine overture. But their whispers soon filled the shore, the gravitas of the harmony fading against the slienced voices of people.

The whisperers' voices came to a sudden halt, rising again louder. A grey-haired man, with only a faint hint of wrinkles on his sturdy face, walked past the crowd. None of them knew him; never before had he joined their gatherings. On his shoulder was a large bag, which the citizens of present time would immediately recognize as an

artist's portfolio. However, this was a faraway future in which the practice of art, or at least what we would perceive as art, had deceased in most forms.

Whispers were no longer whispers; it rose to chatters discussing the mysterious grey-haired man and the purpose he sought, some of those much knowledgeable in the past taking the reign. Then it became screams of people who attempted to be audible over the uncontrollable noises that they in turn made. Amidst the chaotic pandemonium of speech, the grey-haired man, as if unaware of the disarray he wrought, set his easel up near where the waves would touch its leg like a brief breeze. This strange device, a relic of a long gone past, was met with wonder. All eyes in the shore were fixed on the man, who now started to paint, his brush striding across the canvas.

First, he drew the wrinkled face of a newborn; with a few more quick strokes, the newborn turned into a child around the age of five; then to a teen with a cheeky smile; then to a man in his wedding tux, tears streaming down his cheeks; then to the wrinkled face of an old man.

The whispers had ceased. People silently watched the man paint.

The old face now had his eyes closed; a complete peace upon his face, and slowly, with each brush stroke marking the passage of time, his eyes sank deeply to a black hole until his face was nothing but a skeletal resemblance of what it once had been. At last, nothing was left on the canvas save for complete darkness. One would hardly find any trace of the man that had once dominated that white surface.

The grey-haired man rose from his seat, and gently removed the canvas from the easel with much love in his hands. He gazed at the canvas covered completely in black without a word, walked heavily to the shore, then threw it unto the sea.

The audience gasped at the utter destruction of an art piece; some sighed loudly in disapproval, unaware that they were witnessing the completion, not the destruction, of an artwork.

Against the winds that carried the waves, the grey-haired man stood still and fixed his immobile glance to the sea. As people, once again silenced, followed his stare, they saw the canvas, its orderly-worn colors smoking out, dissipating, in chaos.

At this moment, silence became a solemn decree that no one dared to break. The grey-haired man had left in unawareness, but people stood still and watched the same object as it, once again stripped of all colors to a pure white, floated back to the shore. A strong wind brought the canvas back into the open arms of the sea, never to be seen by another living person.

As if they were reminded of a grim reality, one by one, people left, just as they came.

Shadows lay on their faces, their shoulders hanging without purpose. Their perpetual sigh faded into the salty breeze.

The seashore was again empty of any human existence; the voice of the sea filled the shore.

Part Two: Oriens Nocturna

"Be!" He spake, and the world was.

"Let there be light," He spake, and there was light.

And so was darkness. Or it had been from before, and it was only then that light shone upon its being.

And so was many other, as the ages passed, and they were no more, when more ages passed after.

Darkness, however, was eternal.

Light flickered briefly in cycles. Morns and days came and went, the red dawns and dusks trailing after, until even they were no more.

But Night, O Night, was at the end of all things, ever present.

Part Three: Genesis Mortui

No one speaks anymore.

Between the only two left of the human race, one woman and one man, conversation is extinct. They still sleep together, eat together, and walk together; for ages, they have not talked with voices.

Names are lost - birds are just the things that fly, fishes are the things that swim, and the beasts are the things that walk upon four legs. They know to speak, but know not to understand.

World without language came to be the world without knowledge, but the last of mankind has not forgotten their names, the names that were since the beginning.

Shreya Sameeksha

Ganesha

Oil Painting

Poetry

Paige Goodman

My Silent Foe

Hello, I am…
Anxiety—
Sometimes I let things define me
Imperfections, frustrations, and failures
Sometimes I imagine my life is like a movie
I play the soundtrack in my head
Sometimes I wish I was dealt a different hand
The house always seems to win
Sometimes I take a deep breath
But I feel like I am drowning;

Sometimes I want to live in the moment
So I hit pause on the thoughts that I fear
Sometimes I accept my failures
And I let the cards fall where they may
Sometimes I want to be free
So I do not let the little things define me
Sometimes I wonder who I am
And I listen to the sound of my heart beat
Hello, I am…
More than my anxiety

Charity Kamara

The Keeper

Gouache, Ink Pen, & Gold Pen

Morgan Koerner

Watch them Boil

Acrylic Paint

Calliope Second Prize 2018 - Nonfiction

Chan Ju Park

The Eye of Storms in Korean Schools

A few days ago, hurricane "Irma" hit Florida and Cuba. A hurricane consists of the eye and eyewall of the storm. Some people could be in the eye of the storm, which is a region of mostly calm weather. Other people could be in the eyewall where the most severe weather and highest winds occur. It is also possible to be in the rain bands where the clouds spin out and make the storm stronger. Although the eye of the storm may appear calm, people in it are damaged by it. The education system of South Korea is like hurricanes. The highly motivated students are in the eye of the education system of Korea, but most students are in the eyewall and in the rain bands. They are all going to be damaged by the education system of South Korea because the education system there is based on consequentialism, meaning it is solely focused on results. Many students do not know why they are studying. They just keep walking in the maze without any knowledge of the exit. I was also one of the people who was in that maze.

In 2011, I was in middle school and was a basketball player. I spent an hour dribbling the ball and listening to the rhythm as it hit the ground. The rhythmical sound was enough to fill the gym and my ears, but I also heard some students ridiculing us because the strongest stereotype about athletes in Korea is that they are not educated. People think athletes cannot study. I fit this stereotype exactly. I did not even know how to write the alphabet, but I was proud of having basketball skills. I knew that the only thing that I had to do was to be good at basketball and train by myself. However, I did not know that my dense ignorance could be a sign of the dark cloud coming toward me. I got serious injuries on my knee and ankle during the first quarter of the final game of the National Sports Festival, which was the most important game in my whole life. I had to be hospitalized for three months. Also, I spent nine months in rehabilitation. At the end, I gave up my dream of becoming a professional basketball player. I walked hallways in school, my head hanging down because I lost my confidence and determination.

While I was going through this painful experience, I pledged to break the stereotype of athletes not being smart. After a few deep breaths, I started studying basic math skills. I bought elementary math workbooks, but I struggled. However, I believed the old saying, "if noumenon has the right shape, then the shadow of it is also right." That means if someone is doing well, then the result must be great. Even though I strongly believed in that, my efforts did not work for me. I could not solve any math problems on final exams because the teachers did not really care about how students understood concepts. I felt like I was standing in front of a huge wall that I could not overcome. I was disappointed in myself, but I also resented the teachers' lack of preparation and passion for their students. Every question that I got from final tests was a compound question. I had learned a little about the concept but I had never learned how to solve that. So, I could not solve questions because they were a little confusing for me. There were three or four concepts in one math question, so there was no way to get a high score for me. I was anguished because I felt like I was nothing. So, I

asked my classmates for a solution. They told me, "We learned everything from our tutors." I said "So, what did you learn from school?" I was shocked when I heard their answer: "I do not know, I do the homework that my tutor gives me." That sounded like, 'So, why do school teachers earn money?' However, ironically, I assimilated with them. So, my father and I started to look for good tutors and, at the end, I had gotten two tutors. They were great tutors! They knew what questions were going to be on the test and how to solve compound questions. They did not really teach me the concept, but they taught me skills that were needed to solve the questions. Students had to take an exam and apply to high school with their exam results and their middle school GPAs. However, I just listened to my tutors as they dragged me into high school.

Finally, I got accepted to the high school where average students go in Cheong-ju, which is one hour away from Seoul. It seemed like the dark cloud was vanishing. However, at that moment, I had three tutors for English, mathematics, and Korean. My eyes burned every day from the long hours of studying. My father paid $1,500 per month, but that was a common and worthy price in Korea. As the demand for private tutoring increased, the price increased as well. Although those kinds of problems were getting serious, parents could not control private tutoring because it was productive and worthy. The government had enforced a Ya-Ja policy to stop increasing private tutoring costs. Ya-Ja means self-study after the official school hours are over. When I was a freshman, Ya-Ja was mandatory. So, students had to stay at school until 10 PM. I thought Ya-Ja being an alternative for private tutoring which I thought it was beneficial for students. However, the time that students spend for Ya-Ja is too long. When I was in Korea, elite students who got high scores used a dormitory which was only for them. Normal students could not get any help. Even though smartphones, laptops, and tablet PCs could help us to study, we did not get access to them. After that point, my mind changed; Ya-Ja was not the best option. In which the school pretended to teach us, but there was nothing to learn. Consequently, students started to run away to go to private tutoring institutes. Ya-Ja was made to stop students from having private tutoring, but ironically it encouraged them to do the opposite.

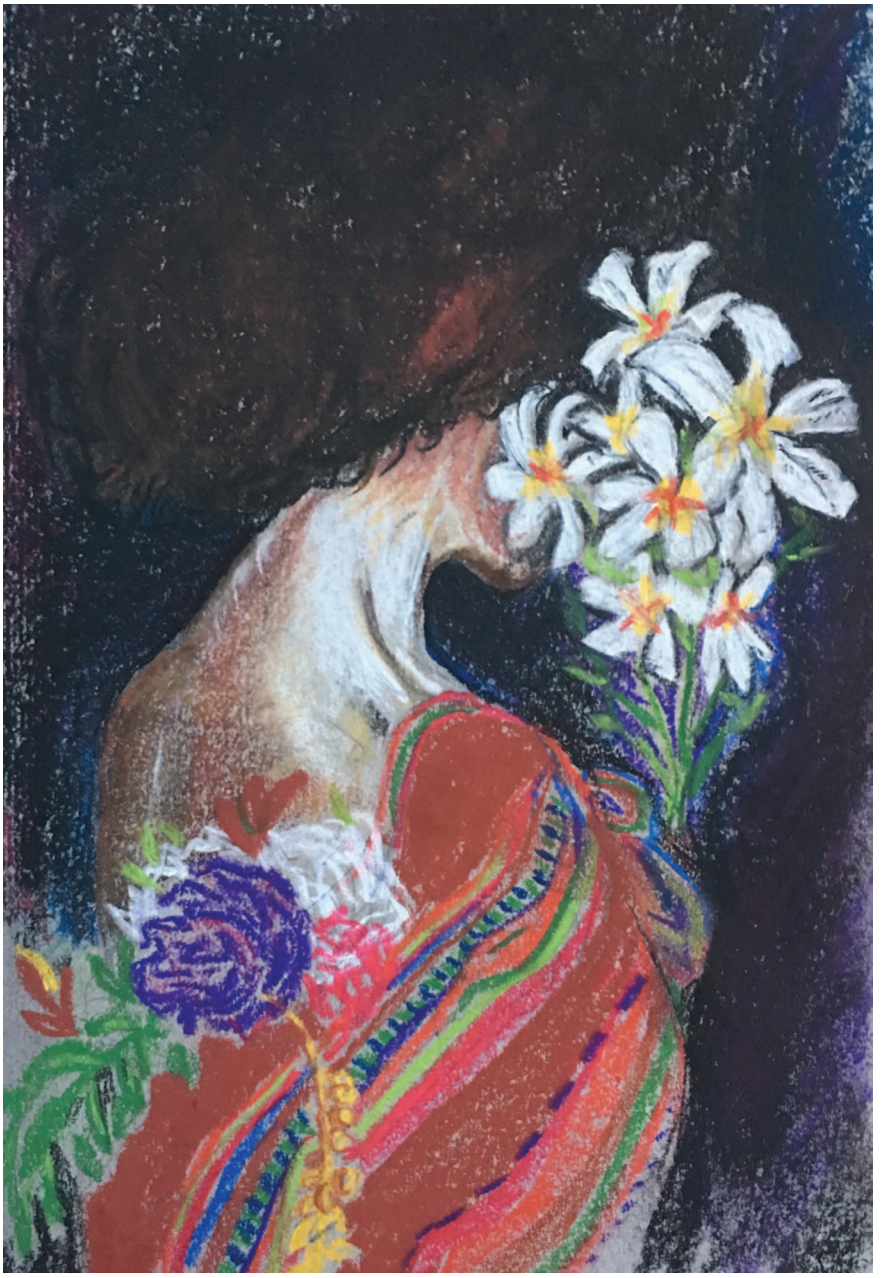
I mentioned that I used to be a basketball player when I was in middle school. This fact led me to love sports whatever sport that may be. We spent almost 85 hours in school per week doing mental work, but there were only two hours that we could exercise, which was not enough. My Korean literature teacher taught us to write essays about the obesity rate of high school students, which was ridiculous because instead of teaching us to be healthy, they simply taught us about health. Fortunately, I was a member of a basketball club and eventually became captain of the club. There were two hours for club activities, so I had four hours to exercise out of 85 hours of school per week. That amount of time was a gift from an angel. I felt like I came back home because rubbery smells, light orange balls, the squeaking sounds of shoes, and the familiar rhythmical dribbling sounds were welcoming me. I was lucky enough to have the opportunity to release my stress with sports. However, many students did not have time to exercise. So, they tried to find other ways to release their stress. Unfortunately, some students found wrong ways to release their stress such as bullying other students which is the worst problem in South Korean schools. Tremendous amounts of homework and studying caused stress and discouraged students. Schools did not teach us how to control ourselves and how to release stress. Personally, I think that exercise is the most important

thing in an adolescence's life. Also, being healthy is one of the essential skills that students should learn. However, Korean education did not even provide that.

In South Korea, especially in high school, schools do not provide a chance to enhance students' self-development. I might be wrong, but based on the experience that I have had in Korean schools, I can say there are many problems. Only a few students are in the eye of the storm; most students stay around the storm. So, they struggle with their stress and with trying to find their own ways to study efficiently. High school is the most important period for students to prepare to go out of their comfort zone; they need their own challenges. Furthermore, they need to learn how to make plans, achieve their own goals, manage their time, and study by themselves, because Korean schools do not teach them these. Finally, the high school education system in South Korea must change its approach to let students develop both mentally and physically.

Alejandra Estefania Carrillo Ugas

Hiding Behind the Flowers



Charcoal and Pastel

Calliope Second Prize 2018 - ESL Prose

Hui-Chuan Chen

Being Deaf

Hi, I am Hui-Chuan Chen. I am a deaf student from Taiwan. I am learning English now.

The causes of being hearing impaired can be divided into two kinds, congenital and acquired. The degrees of hearing loss are classified such as mild, moderate, and severe. Even though deaf people with severe deafness cannot talk and listen, they never give up on their dreams and future. Although people think that deaf people cannot possibly achieve their goals, deaf people still move on to their future dreams. However, being deaf affects education, communication, and interpreting.

This first effect of being deaf is difficulties at school. For example, deaf students go to their classes, and their classmates are listening attentively while the lecturers are lecturing. Deaf students do not understand what the lecturers say. Also, they are unable to listen when other classmates listen to music or voices on the radio. In short, it is difficult for people with hearing loss to learn in classes and they cannot listen to different kinds of sounds in their life, but they try to challenge themselves and learn by themselves.

The second effect of being deaf is difficulty in communication. Deaf people are unable to listen to what their hearing friends are talking about and reply to them. In society, it is problematic to communicate with hearing people in public because they don't know how to use sign language with deaf people in their conversation. For example, hearing people don't know sign language, while deaf people are unable to hear. Deaf people need some tools like papers with pens and the note app on cell phones to communicate with hearing people. For me, I usually text in my cell phone and show it to a hearing employee when I cannot find something in the supermarket or some store. I learned lip reading for four years when I was a child; I have always used my lips to communicate with hearing people in public in my country Taiwan because no hearing people can learn and use sign language to communicate with deaf people in public. In fact, deaf people who have severe deafness, cannot talk, and are unable to listen. However, they try to work hard to overcome their challenges and rely on their eyes to see and read lips or other movements. In short, communication is a really big challenge for deaf people.

This third challenge of being deaf is learning sign language. For example, I, a deaf student studying in the United States, have to learn American Sign Language because I need to watch and understand my American Sign Language interpreters' sign language. They usually interpret what my teachers are lecturing about in my classes at school. My interpreters usually interpret the meaning of words, sentences, information, and actions of what my teachers are lecturing about in my college classes. Although I am studying at NOVA, I use my cell phone or a pen with papers to communicate with hearing people on the campus. I have sometimes learned and practiced ASL to chat with deaf friends on holidays. I also had to learn Taiwanese Sign Language since I studied at a university in my country, but I only learned a little in Taiwanese Sign Language. As a result, if I do not learn

in American Sign Language, I am unable to assimilate and understand what these teachers or other people say in the United States.

All in all, education, communication, and interpreting are really problematic, but they are big challenges for deaf people to experience and overcome. However, deaf students need to encourage each other. Deaf people must try hard. They will be successful, happy, and wonderful in their lives.

Caleb Sica

Icarus

Photograph

Calliope Second Prize 2018 - Fiction

Hope Bachman

Actually

It's too early for a Sunday. The blue-green lights on the coffee maker say 6:11. Sadie reaches for them with one little hand, almost unbalancing herself from my hip. I yawn; she imitates me. At 6:30 the coffee will start itself automatically. But I'm not waiting. Coffee must come before anything else.

I flip on the kitchen lights, the sudden fluorescent brightness an assault. Even though I'm blinking hard, I'm still trying to check Sadie's pupils, looking for signs that the ER doctors missed something. Nothing.

I put Sadie in her high chair and strap her in more tightly than usual. Once she's in, I start making her breakfast. I don't hear anything from upstairs. Luke must still be asleep. Lucky him.

My hip and neck are one big cramp from sleeping on the floor by Sadie's crib. I stretch. Outside the kitchen window, false dawn is becoming real dawn and I can see the silhouette of the car.

And I see yesterday…

The sun is high. Luke walks down the driveway. In one hand, Sadie is strapped in her car carrier. In the other hand, Luke holds a six pack of IPAs and a bag of snacks to share with his brother Matt and others while they watch college ball. He sets Sadie on the roof to put the food in the trunk. Before he shuts the hatch, his phone rings. He answers. Whoever is on the other end, whatever they say, they have his attention. He shuts the hatch, gets in the driver's seat, and pulls out of the driveway. He accelerates up the street, and Sadie tumbles off the roof in a wild spinning loop-de-loop.

"Muh!" Sadie says. It's delightful and unfair how cheerful she is this morning. I give her some blueberry puffs and pour my coffee. The creak of the fourth stair announces Luke's arrival.

"There's daddy," I tell Sadie. She wiggles.

Luke kisses Sadie. Then he comes up behind me.

"How'd you sleep?" He asks. His cheek brushes my cheek as he leans past me to grab a bowl and mug. "How'd she sleep?"

I stir my coffee before answering. "She slept fine. Not a peep."

"I kept wondering if you'd come to bed."

I crack my stiff neck. "I wanted to be close to her."

"Sure."

The microwave chirps. Sadie's peaches are thawed. Luke's pours his coffee and is just getting his cereal.

"You sleep okay?" I ask. I assume the answer is yes, since I didn't hear him all night.

"I think I fell asleep around 3, but I saw the clock at 4 something and again at 5-ish."

I haven't really looked at him yet. Now I do. Luke is always rumpled at breakfast, bed-headed and unshaven. Today he has dark circles under his eyes and he looks gray.

Sadie bangs her spoon on her highchair tray. We've excluded her and she doesn't like it. Luke undoes all my work getting Sadie settled in her chair to hold her. I lean in to hear, "Daddy's so sorry, Tater Tot… Daddy loves you;" a litany.

Any other morning, this would be sweet. "She's too young to remember this," I tell him. "Consciously, anyway. She could grow up and be terrified of falling. Or roller coasters."

"Are you trying to joke?"

I settle Sadie in her chair again. "I'm just saying, the brain has weird ways of processing. I slept ok last night; next month I'll be having nightmares."

"You weren't there to see it."

"If I'd been there, it wouldn't have happened."

He is silent. A silence that stretches and pulls tight inside our throats. A silence that barely registers the small interruptions of clinking spoons and Sadie's small hums as she eats. This is how we fight.

He runs a tense hand through his hair. "I'm sorry, ok? You can't kick my ass--"

"Don't curse in front of--"

"--Any harder than I'm kicking myself. You have no idea."

But I can. I do. Looking out at the car was at least the tenth time I imagined it. I take my eyes off of Sadie and breakfast; look him full in the face. "I just don't understand why you were in such a rush. Matt would have understood if you were late. …Was it the phone call?"

There's something different about his silence, or about his face, or about his eyes over his coffee cup. Or am I imagining that? No, we can't play poker together, because I know his tells.

"Luke. Who called?"

"I don't want you to make a bigger deal of this than it actually is," he says slowly.

That's all I need. I know who called. Still, I wait for him to confirm it. He's in no rush. "Here, let me take over peach duty so you can eat," he says.

I hand over Sadie's bowl and spoon and stand to make toast.

He clears his throat. "Actually, it was Kim. She asked for some help with some boxes of books she's getting rid of. And since she's always asking you for a chance to play with Sadie, I figured I could make a quick detour. But then…"

"Kim." I knew it. When he said her name, it hung there while he kept talking. Now that I say it, it lands with a thud between us.

"I know, and--"

"Did Kim actually need help with boxes?"

"That's what she said."

Another taut silence. The toast popping up is as loud as fireworks.

"Em?"

I don't reply. I don't know what to think. This should be nothing. Luke is her friend. So am I, technically. I brought her into our social circle. Kim was my co-worker when Luke and I got engaged. We had a lot of single guy-friends at the time, and I thought she'd hit it off with at least one of them. She did, but it never lasted. I'd feel bad for her if she hadn't taken to flirting with Luke. He doesn't really flirt back, but she keeps escalating. Brazenly.

Right in front of me. Even when I was six months pregnant.

"Emma, please say something."

If I had the strength, I'd plunge the toast and plate and knife straight through the table, through the floor, through the foundation, through the earth, straight to the core. As it is, all three rattle as I put them down.

"Does Kim know I know about New Year's? Does she even remember climbing on your lap, or were you both that drunk?"

"I haven't talked to her about it. We agreed I'd avoid her."

"Until yesterday."

"It was last minute."

"But you were so eager to help her with her boxes that you—"

"I'M SORRY! I told you, I'm beating myself up over this way more than you can."

"Be honest," I tell him. "Would you have been rushing if Matt had needed the help? Or anybody but her?"

He looks away. He is silent for so long that I have to bounce Sadie on my knee so she doesn't get bored. Finally, he says, "I don't know."

"What does that mean?"

"It means I don't know."

"Luke--"

"Emma, I swear to God, it's like you want me to say that when Kim called, all I wanted was to rush to her house to rip her clothes off."

"That's not what I want," I say, only partly honestly.

He starts putting away his dishes. "It really seems like it."

"Why would I want that?"

His hand rests over his bowl in the dishwasher. His eyes are on it and not on me or Sadie. "Apparently you want to think the worst of me?"

I have to admit, he's not entirely wrong. It would be easier to think about the accident if it had occurred because he was faithless, not just rushed and distracted. Otherwise, it could have happened to anyone. It could have happened to me.

"Em?"

I give him our daughter and go to the window. My insides are upside down. I see the car again, sunlight glinting off the windshield. I see yesterday. But this time, I don't see Sadie flying off the car roof. The events go a different way. Luke puts Sadie in the car-seat base first. She's safe. His phone rings. Kim asks for him. He goes. Maybe, hopefully, probably, there are boxes to move and Luke moves them while Kim entertains my baby. But maybe not. What happens at Kim's has no real witnesses; Sadie's too young to tell what happens there.

…I'd rather see the accident again…

Luke rises with Sadie and stands at my shoulder. "Emma, I love you. I love Sadie. I'm sick over what happened yesterday. If it had gone a different way, I don't know what I'd do. Luckily it didn't, and Sadie's fine, but I'm still sick. Tell me how I can fix it."

"There's nothing to fix," I say, frozen, drained, and empty. "Nothing actually happened."

Alexandria Ditursi

Surge

Graphite & Watercolor Graphite Pencils

Poetry

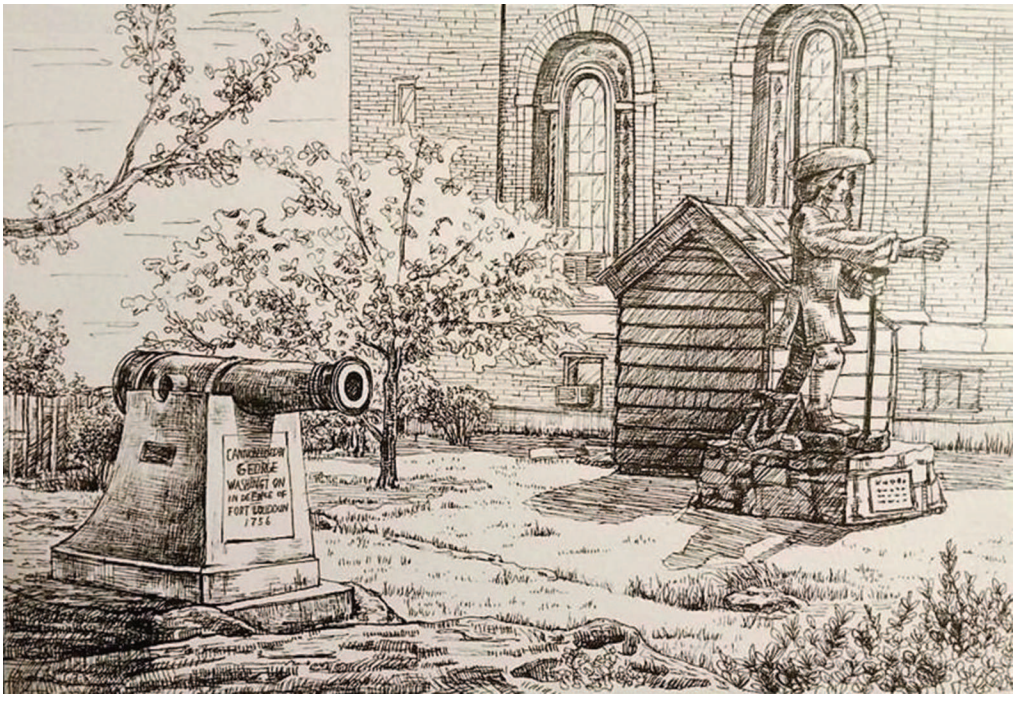
Madeleine Gierber

Shifting

There is a space
Between the softness of the night
And the harsh light of morning
Where you fit perfectly against my hips
But in the brightness
Our edges don't quite match
And I think I'm the only one who notices.

Jinghui Luo

Remembrance of City



Ink Pen

Courtney Jessica Thompson

To-Do List

Computer Drawing

Calliope Third Prize 2018 - Nonfiction

Kevin Garlepp

The Hitchhiker

It was midday and it had just finished raining. St martin was especially raining in the early summers. My friends and I had just finished high school and to celebrate our success we decided to take a trip to St Martin. All of us had temporary forgotten responsibilities and our first semester of college approaching in just a few months. There were four of us. We were driving back from a local crepe shop on the French side to out hostel on the Dutch side. It was especially enjoyable to watch the locals go about their daily responsibility's as we drove through the small towns. While driving through the mountains, you could smell the fresh rain steaming in the hot sun that had now become exposed. When we got into the valley where the French side meets the Dutch side we all saw a man who looked out of place. The man was among locals and had his thumb out, a hitchhiker. We passed him and didn't give much thought. I mentioned the man knowing that all my friends had noticed him.

"we should go back and pick him up" I offered

"defiantly not" Justin, once a local of St. Martin replied

The streets of St Martin are not a place where you would want to pick up any random pedestrian let alone a hitchhiker. After some convincing, Justin agreed to go back for the man. Since the island only has one stop light, we made a quick U-turn at the next round about.

When we got back to the valley we saw the man was still looking for a ride. The man looked young, maybe in his 20s with brown hair and a stubby beard. He wore green cargo pants with a flannel over a dirty red t-shirt as he burdened the heavy load of his camping backpack containing a sleeping bag, some food and clothes.

We asked him where he was going.

"Maho" he said

Naturally we let him in before any introductions. The man was traveling to a popular tourist destination called Maho Beach. Maho is famous for the experience of passenger airplanes landing and taking off just 100ft over the head of spectators.

"what's your name?" we asked

"Kai." replied the man

Kai later explained that he was from Poland and just finished up a Masters degree. He told us that he had been traveling for about half a year but had no intention of stopping anytime soon. We asked the man why he ever decided to go on this trip in the first place.

"no reason, for the experience" he replied.

We asked him how he got here, and he told us that he had he flew into Venezuela and had worked his way up to St. Martin where he had run out of money. Kai had been working as a roof cleaner on the French side to raise money for the next leg of his trip.

The drive to Mahalo was short, just 15 minutes from where we picked him up and five past our hotel. We showed Kai where he can find a list of departing and arriving flights. The

sun was setting, and it didn't look like any of the larger flights that tourist come to see were departing or arriving until tomorrow. Kai seemed disappointed.

"what are you going to do now? Wait?" I asked

"yeah, I'll probably wait here until tomorrow morning. Sleep on the sand." He said

This seemed insane to us

"got nowhere else to go" he later added

He was rite, he had nowhere else to go. Kai had thrown himself to the world and had no choice but to go with whatever it threw back at him. He had to work with the situation at hand. Kai thanked us again for the ride and we took some pictures. After a brief and subtle goodbye, we drove off. We looked back but lost Kai in the crowded beach.

During the ride back to our hotel I couldn't get Kai out of my head. It was so interesting to me that he decided to go on a journey with no end in sight. I wanted to know so much more about him. I wanted to know more about his trip. I wanted to know more about his family and childhood. I wanted to know why he went on the journey in the first place. I wanted to be him. But in a way, Kai is quite relatable. He set off on a journey not knowing where it was going to take him or when it would ever stop. He lives every day not knowing how it will end or what he will do. Just like everybody else. Just like me.

Uyen Dang

Judgment

Photograph

"ZZ" Rodrigo Rodruguez

It's Just an Act

Computer Design

Trina Al Majid

Merciless Cult

Ink Pen

Calliope Third Prize 2018 - Fiction

Mousa Toure

Miracle Worker

Dr. Josiah Barlev haggardly hurried himself down the halls to The Heroes UNITED medical bay. He was weary, perpetually unshaven, and bags hung beneath his eyes like someone had taken permanent residence there. He was just… so tired. But work was calling.

The UN-run Heroes UNITED was a collection of people uniquely able to handle threats of aliens, supernatural happenings, natural disasters; you know, superhero stuff. And the position of this sad looking man in this collection was Head Medical Doctor. There were many MDs in Heroes UNITED, but few as uniquely qualified to be there as him.

Before he got within a foot of the infirmary door, a crash from within made him jump startledly. As he collected himself, he could hear loud animalistic roaring and the sound of destruction. He nervously stared at the doors rattling. He slowly lifted his hand to open the door.

It exploded open!

He was knocked down as medical staff ran straight out the room in various states of dishevelment. He didn't register the pain as he landed and got back on his feet. What caused that kind of reaction? They dealt with the unusual daily. It made him anxious.

He entered, despite himself. The room was a mess: tools and machines strewn about, a patient bed utterly destroyed, and so much blood, streaked across the floor and splattered walls. But the blood didn't seem to belong to the medical staff.

He looked down and saw what they were dealing with.

"WHAT!?" Dr. Barlev gasped sharply. It was a dragon. An honest to god dragon. It was not as large as he expected dragons to be but it was still huge. It was stout, round and breathing coarsely. There with a huge jagged line across its side that was spilling blood. The rotund beast was covered in shimmering dark green scales and a golden underbelly. It had a long snout and a pair of curved horns. Its most striking feature resembled a line of large black spiked dreadlocks that covered its head and snaked down its spine to the end of its short tail.

The bottom dropped from under Dr. Barlev's stomach. He was trained for a lot, but not this. This was officially too much. Broken arm? Rabies? Barlev was your man. Mythical creature of unknown power from another world!? Oh nooooooooooo. No no no.

The creature huffed in pain and growled in a manner that could only be interpreted as frustration. Dr. Barlev was as frightened as he was awed by the dragon. The head surgeon rushed over.

"Oh thank gods you're here!" She exclaimed. "It's in critical condition and in a lot of pain, but we don't know what to do!"

"… Why… dragon...How?" Dr. Barlev sputtered.

"Great Scot and Clydesdale brought it in! It just appeared and helped them fight an evil Leprechaun in Cardiff!"

More typical superhero madness. Helping the creature was more important. He squinted at the cut but It was hard to truly gauge it due to the different skin composition. If he were to hazard a guess, the irregular shape of the wound was indicative of a jagged cutting weapon. Thankfully nothing gave the impression that an energy or magical attack did this or he'd be even more out of his depth.

"I'm…I think… I'm going to help them," Dr. Barlev sighed. His face wasn't scared but his shaking body and quivering voice said this was beyond him. But he didn't become a doctor just to not try. Even before he joined the Heroes UNITED he was, or at least tried to be, everyone's doctor because of what he could do. It was his purpose and passion. It made him miserable.

"Get me a plant… from storage… a large cactus." Dr. Barlev said to the staff. They were more than eager to run to medical storage.

Dr. Barlev got on his hands and knees.

He crawled towards the being. Very. Slowly. Under his frown, he nervously gritted his teeth. He approached the dragon and it opened its eye. It was golden, piercing. Looking straight at him. He froze. Its body tensed up, breathing sharply...

They stared at each other. Ten seconds passed. thirty seconds passed. One minute passed. Two minutes. Four. It felt like a lifetime. What was the next step? Why the hell did he volunteer to be the dragon healer!?

He started talking.

"Hi… I don't… I don't know if you can understand me…" he went a centimeter closer. "You probably don't know who we are… or why you're here. But… but know that…we're here to help."

He inched forward a little more. The dragon bared its long, pointed, ivory teeth but did nothing else. He got a little closer.

"My name is Josiah….I help people… I'm a doctor, a healer… I want to make you well…. and I can. Probably better than anyone else…"He looked down, memories rushing back to him. Pain. He looked up again and inched closer.

"I'll help you. No matter how much you might hurt me…" he said, getting closer and closer, his breathing intensifying.

"Doctor!

Dr. Barlev looked up and saw the cactus had been delivered. He hadn't even noticed. Apparently neither had the dragon. That meant it was listening.

"I just... Need you to trust me…." he was a less than a foot away now. The dragon was still. He slowly reached his hand out. His arm was shaking. His hand was reaching closer. He was shaking. The dragon looked at his arm. It did nothing. He was shaking. It looked. His hand got closer. It did nothing. He was shaking. Closer. Nothing. Closer. Looking. Shaking. Looking.

THERE!

His palm was on the dragon's smooth scaly side that somehow felt pillowy flesh and steel. He felt its breathing getting steady as a being's can get with a major laceration on their side.

He looked at its face again and saw…. was that a smile?

He reached over to the cactus with his other hand, pushing through the barbs like nothing.

"Okay… you're going to feel… a lot better soon…. you know what they say…." He paused. To an outsider it would look like a dramatic pause before a one liner, but his sharp intake of breath and stiff arms sent a different message. "This is going to hurt me a lot more than it'll hurt you…"

For a moment there was nothing. Then the dragon's eyes widened. Its breathing was improving and it looked as though it was being renewed. The cut on its side was slowly disappearing.

Dr. Barlev's breathing became labored. The huge gash was disappearing from the dragon, shrinking and stitching the scales whole again. As the wound left the creature's body, one was forming along Dr. Barlev's body. Blood flowed from his side as his skin was being torn apart, beginning from beneath one arm. He was getting weaker. The wound was growing longer and deeper, his scrubs darkening as the injury carved its bloody swath across his chest

The dragon was healed. Its side free of injury. That was Dr. Barlev's burden. Slowly, the cut was disappearing from his body. As Dr. Barlev's torso stitched itself together, a gash on the desert plant was grew as long Dr. Barlev before it, and the dragon before him.

Dr. Barlev was healed, his side free of injury. That was the cactus's burden now. He fell to his knees and smiled at the dragon weakly.

The Dragon smiled back, sat up, giving a loud victorious roar. To everyone's surprise, it was changing.

Once nearly as long as a fully grown man is tall, it soon began to resemble a rather short woman who was big all around. Her fat body fit comfortably in a shimmering green sleeveless one piece outfit; scales decorating the piece, her middle covered by a large golden sash. Her huge arms looked as powerful as the dragon's, her hands and her forearms clad with huge clawed gauntlets with giant purple gems on the back.

The woman had notably long black dreadlocks, piercing golden eyes, and an enchanting laugh.

"Thank ya Doc!" She exclaimed "Ya a real miracle worker!"

"That's what they call me…" Dr. Barlev sighed. "What do I call you?"

"Tha Dragoneer, world's firs' inventa a dragon tech!" She exclaimed with a dramatic yet elegant stance, hands on her hips. She quickly raised her hands in concern "Ya okay there, doc?" she said with wide eyes as she watched the panting doctor collapse on his back on the floor. He stared at the ceiling, his chest heaving slowly. The doctors and The Dragoneer stood over him, each face filled with as much concern as he's ever felt for others.

"You alright there?"

"Thank you so much for your help doctor!"

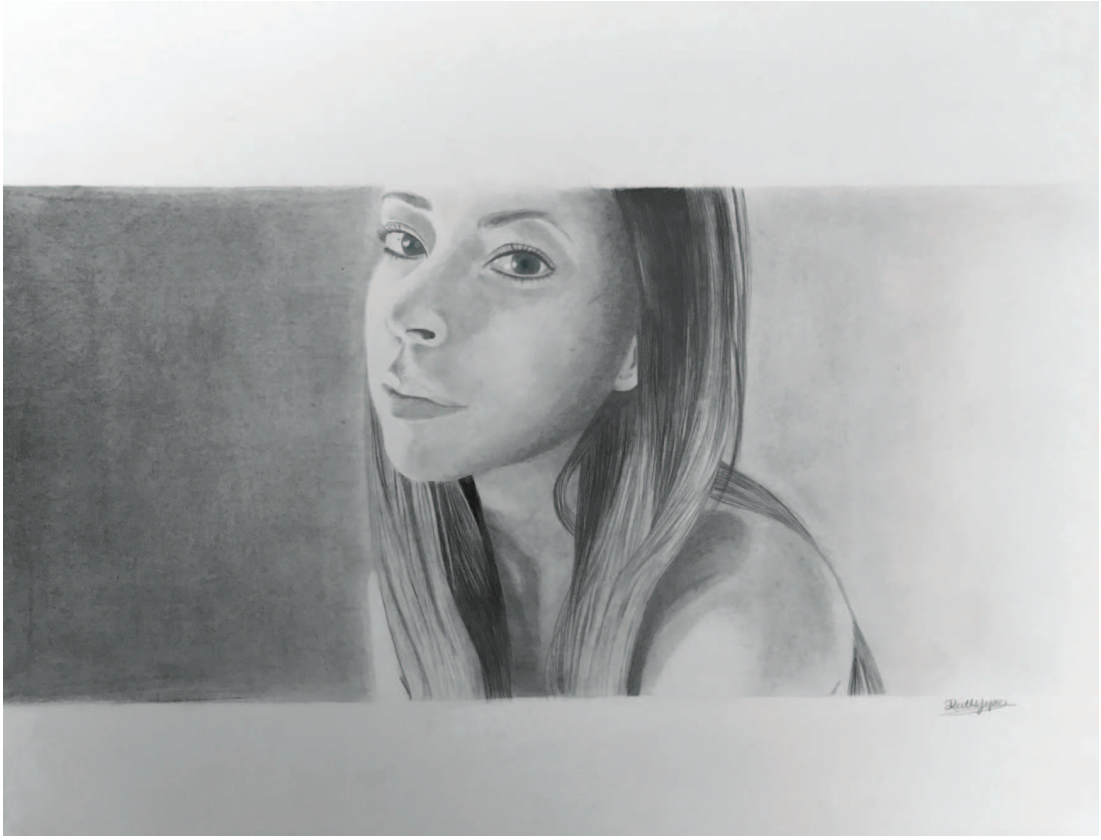
"We couldn't have done this without you…"

His exhaustion left for a single moment as he re-remembered what all this was for.

"Happy to help," Josiah sighed, a nigh content smile plastered on his face.

Ruth Maria Yepez

Discovering Her



Pencil

Ya Ye

Sadness

Oil Paint

Shannon O'Connor

Starlight

Acrylic Paint

Poetry

Amara Leonard

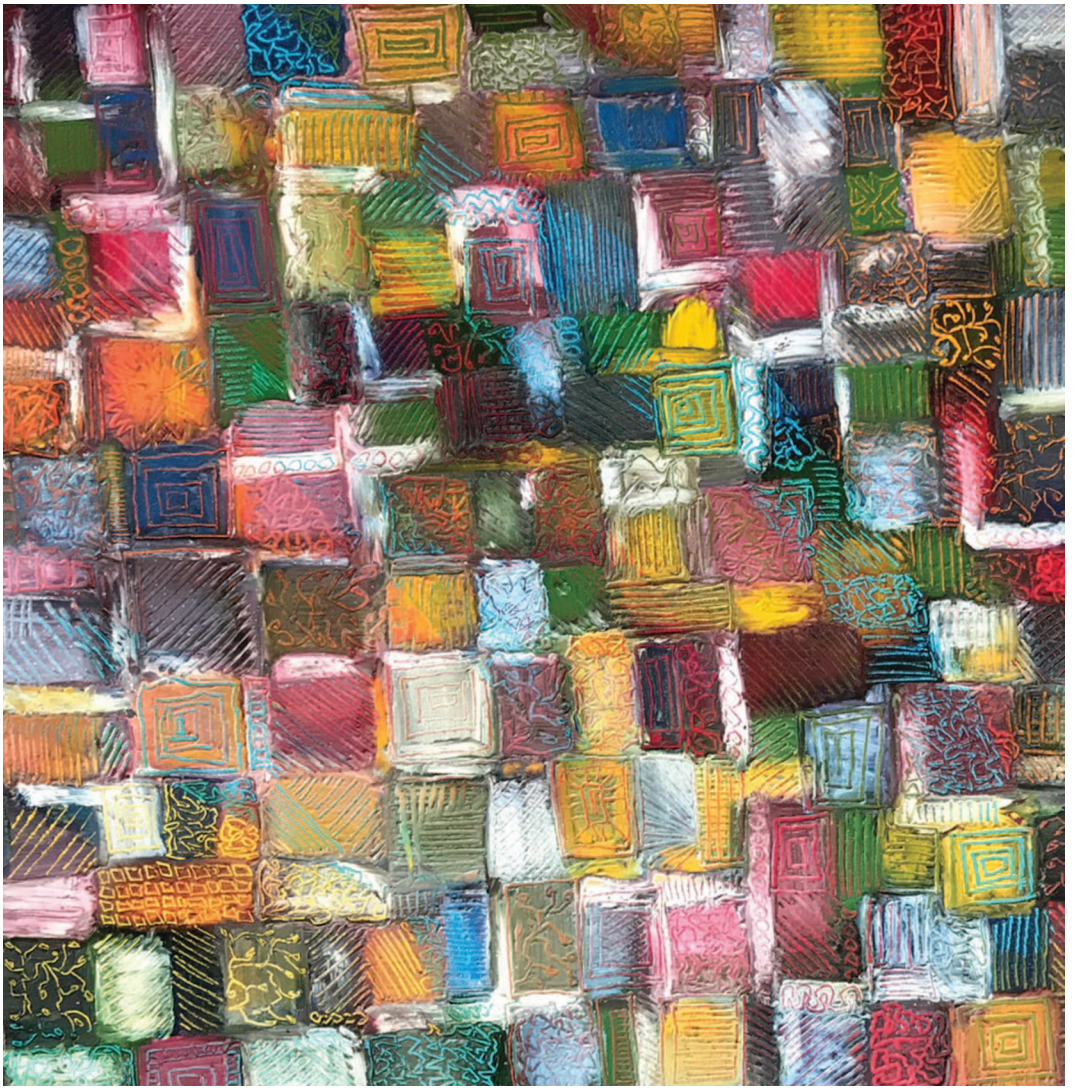
Two Different Minds

Being bilingual;
Two languages clash
On the tip of my tongue.
One meant to be forgotten;
One yet to feel comfortable in.
Words lag
In being mustered.
I construct
Sentences
Contrary to what others
Innately know.
They were lucky
To be born,
Unknowingly in a language
To what I see on the outside
As a privilege
To work for.
Failing to meet
The expectations
Around me.
What people want;
Sometimes demand.
In school
I'm seen as the "foreigner",
The "lagger"
The teacher told us
" 'The dog walks down the street'
now say it after me."
Before I can stop myself
"ˇ ˇ ˇ ˇˇ ˇ ˇ"
Breaks off from my lips.
The class turns around
Stares and whispers are heard.
My embarrassment ripens.
The teacher sighs,
Turns her head
To meet the dusty chalkboard.

The eerie sound of chalk
Scratches the board.
What was my mind thinking?
My fists clench
So hard.
They turn white as blood escapes.
Why do I
Make such leaps
Only to embarrass myself
Each and every time?
This language
Is so hard
For me to learn.
But I'm even more motivated
To learn now.
For with each trip
And fall backwards,
I get up
And run forward even stronger.
But I won't meet
All of their expectations.
I will never
Forget
Who I am.
After all,
Two different minds
Think better
Than just one.

Elizabeth Black

Patch Work Thoughts I



Acrylic Paint

Nonfiction

Michelle Brummett

I Am Alexis

I am a good daughter. I am a survivor of my father. I am my mother's backbone. I am the shoulder my mom cries on. I am the one she goes to when she needs to talk. I am that rock she needed. I am that feeling of comfort, the feeling of not being alone. I am loyalty. I am a child who became a best friend. I am a child who put her life aside to help. I am the reason my mom is still here.... I am the legs of the chair that holds her up. I am the light that shines in darkness.

I am a free spirit. I am the happy in sad. I am the waves in the ocean . I am the cool breeze on a hot day. I am the wind in the sails. I am the stars in the sky. I am the sun behind the clouds on a dreary day. I make the best of all situations. I am the person who can try and cheer you up when you're having a bad day. I am a wild child. I am crazy and fun. I am the person who goes with the flow. I am outspoken. I am loud and talkative. I am who I am today because of who I was yesterday, and who i want to be tomorrow. I am the person who makes everyday worth living. I am the person who puts her pain aside to help others in pain. I am a free spirited wild child who does not depend on anyone but herself. I am who i am today because of my personality.

I am the type of person to put on a brave face and smile through the pain. I am deceiving. I am a girl who kept everything inside when her world went upside. I am the type of girl who put on a smile on her face and laughed throughout the day hiding the pain. I am a girl who lost everything. I am a girl who finally gave up. I am a girl who gave life another shot. I am a girl who put aside her grieving for her mother's sake. I am the girl who cried at night alone just so her mom wouldn't see her and cry too. I am the girl who hid every emotion just so people would stop asking questions. I am the girl who lost who she was. I am the girl trying to get back up after a hard fall.

I am the girl who lost her father 2 years ago. I am the girl who is traumatized from seeing her father lay so lifeless on the ground where her parents slept every single night. I am the girl just trying to make it day by day. I am the type of girl to not take people for granted because you never know how long they have. I am now the girl who can make something positive to something negative. I am the girl whose world came down crumbling yet I am still making the best of everything. I am the girl who is lost and trying to find her way. I am that kind of girl. I am the girl who WILL find her way.

Fiction

Emma Davis

Ink - A Creation Myth

"Alone." it whispered.

That's what the strange feeling, the cold pit in its stomach, was.

"Alone." Its whispers grew softer. "Alone."

It did not know where the word had come from. It did not know where it was or what it had come from. There was nothing around it but darkness, and it was continuous with the dark. They were part of each other. It did not even have a name. Its thoughts paused on that consideration. Do I have one? I do not think so. I will call myself something. I will make myself.

With an agonizing pull and drag, the darkness formed into a new HER. Her heart was a black hole, her skin porcelain, her blood ink, and her mind clockwork. She could think of no name. She did not know what made a good name.

"I AM…." she tried out the new voice, the one that had actual sound, from icy, metallic vocal chords, feeling words on her new tongue.

But there was no sound in the blackness. She could only hear herself because she knew what her words were. New ones came to her each second, flooding her. She could only think in all the definitions she knew for things that did not exist and possibly never had. She still did not know who she was, but she wanted to be something. She wanted to be something else, more than what she was. She held worlds inside her, she knew she did. Am I…imagining?

"Mother." she whispered.

That was what she wanted to be. A mother. She would not be alone. She would be whole and complete. She wanted to create. Have I been created? Is there someone out there who loves me? It does not matter. I am the only one. I have control and will create if I wish. She would have her own creation, and it would be beautiful. She would form anything she could possibly imagine.

But then she wondered what a creation was like. Is it like my body? Can I do the same thing with worlds? What shall I do to have something that I have made and that belongs to me? She thought about a world with beaches and oceans and palm trees and sun. She thought about a world that was beautiful with colorful flowers and creatures. What do I have to do? She thought of a paradise, but nothing materialized. There was only the blackness, the darkness around her. She had nothing to love and nothing she could own.

"Alone." her mouth caressed the deplorable word.

Have I always been alone? She shuddered. There was a strange magnetic feeling inside, as if her chest were pulling in on itself, threatening to collapse. Sharp pain

like knives—Knives?—tore through her body. She breathed. She had never breathed before. The searing pain traveled through her lungs. She shivered once, and then all pain stopped. She did not need to breathe. She was not sure she liked it, yet she wanted to breathe even though she did not need it. It made her feel something.

Was that a flicker in the distant blackness? A flicker of light and warmth? As soon as it had come, it was gone. What had changed? All she knew was that when she had thought of her beautiful world that she wanted so badly, words had flooded through her head, pain had flooded through her body, and no world had come. There was no beauty. There was absolutely nothing but her, and she was alone. She took a deep breath and thought of it again. Perhaps it was that she had breathed. Only this time, she shook all over and the feeling of her body pulling in on itself, ready to implode, became stronger. She stopped. There was another golden flicker, but it was, again, gone as soon as it had come. She glanced down at her hands. They had been spotless, white porcelain before.

She was confused to see cracks oozing black liquid—ink, her lifeblood. She lifted her hand closer to her face to observe the progress of the ink floating off of it. It leaked out of the thin cracks and drifted into the air in thick droplets. There was a shimmer in the air around the ink reminiscent of the two flickers she had seen. She could feel the corners of her mouth curve upward and she realized she was smiling. Her skin hurt where there were cracks, but she did not care. She smiled harder. Perhaps she could create. She would finally have something that was hers. How much time had passed? How long had she existed? It did not matter if she was the only thing that existed. She needed something else.

She was about to think of her world again when she had an idea. She dug the fingers of one hand into the cracks of her other, widening them. She screamed in pain, but ink spilled out. Her chest was collapsing and her head swam, but there was a rush of ecstasy as a golden glimmer formed. She pried apart the cracks of her other hand. The cracks climbed up her arms to her chest and the rest of her body. The golden glimmer vanished. What had happened? She found darkness spilling out of her limbs with ink, the black hole in her chest expanding. Her skin shattered. She felt nothing anymore, but watched in horror as her ink formed words and then built a bleak landscape around her. She fought as the landscape overtook her, her skin consumed into it. Words piled on words and then materialized into objects, the words no longer seen. The barren landscape stretched out flat, smothering her. Her eyes were the last to be covered, but not before she saw two figures, shivering in the barren landscape and cursing at the sky. There was creation, but there was only destruction beneath the surface.

Trina Al Majid

Depravity

Ink Pen

Poetry

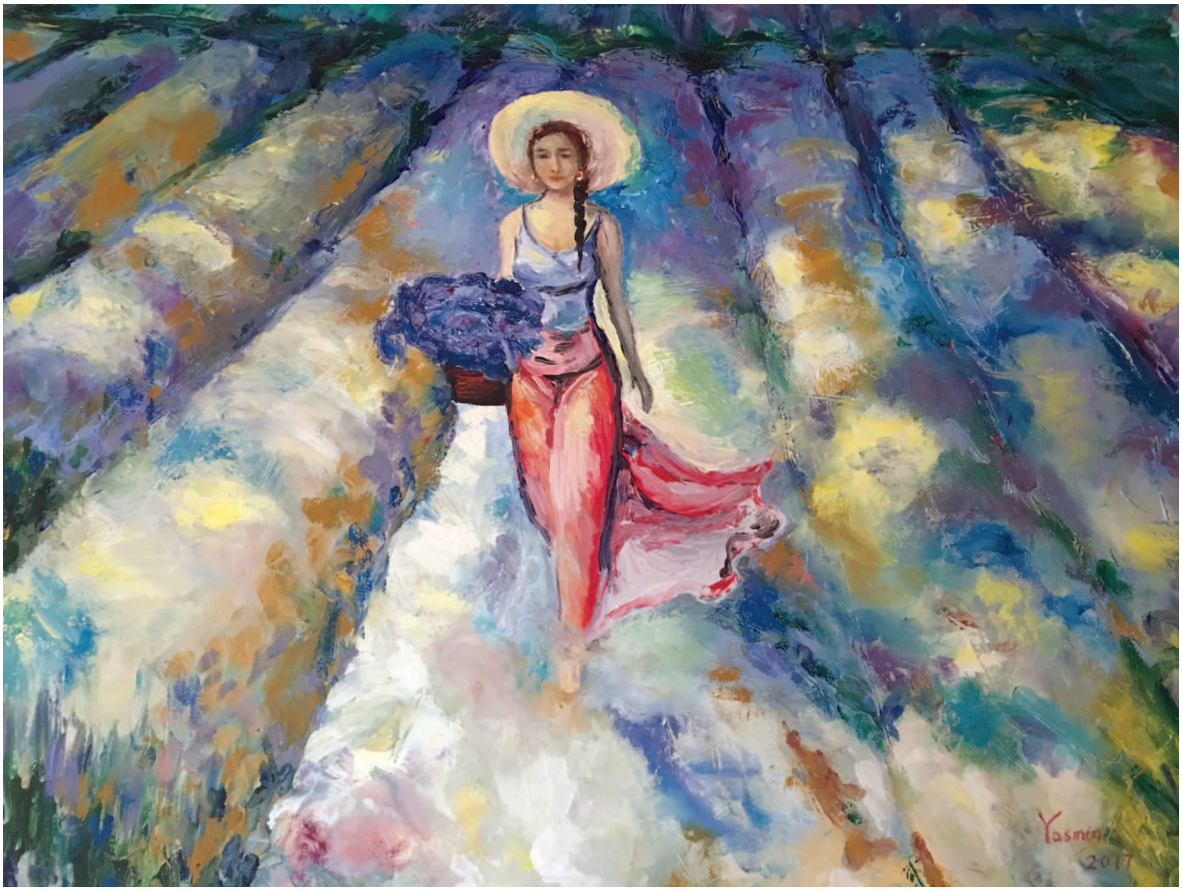
Arzoo Khan

Oh the Questions I Ask....

I don't know where life will take me from here
or if I'll be stuck in the exact same place.
If the dark depths of earth will choose to consume me
or if it's beauty will empower me to light up even the darkest corners of the world.
And after the light is lit, will it inspire a scorching passion in a bystander's eyes?
Or will they see me as a threat? One who plays with fire,
Where it's almost prophetic I will get burned,
but I think of the girl who was burned alive just the other day.
She was from a place near my parents village.
She helped a couple elope, she was only 15.
An honor killing.
Such darkness I've seen, such pitch black.
Such blindness indeed. I don't know how to react.
Could that have been me? a selfish question to ask.
Oh, how grateful I am for all that I have.
Why do I need their darkness to help appreciate my light?
And what will become of those who live a colorless life?
And who am I to paint over their plight?
Why was I given the better life?
Me, who stands still at the green lights.
Forgetful, irresponsible me.
What will I do with the life I've been given?
And is it too late to start a new beginning?
But I think of the boy whose fingers were blistered from the
frying oil at his french fry stand under the sun.
He looked to be 10, but even he didn't know his own age
10 fingers with big bloody boils.
I couldn't look away.
I met him on a vacation in Pakistan.
Is it too late for him to start school?
My little brother is 10. He complains about playtime.
His fingers are usually covered in mud or Hot Cheeto stains.
I wish I had the power to awaken the world.
To tell everyone that bad things exist, even if we can't see them.
That turning a blind eye is no way to live,
but I just continue writing with a pencil in my grip.

Ya Ye

On the Field of Hope



Oil Paint

Courtney Jessica Thompson

Camp Varsity

Computer Drawing

Nonfiction

Rocio Ortiz

Orientation: Do We Really Need to Do This?

It was an unusually pleasant day in August. The humidity had lifted somewhat, making the warm air easier to breathe. I was driving with my 5 year old son Isaias (I like to call him Izzy) in the car, and he loved to have the windows down. He's the kind of kid that likes to feel the wind whip past us while he sticks his little hands out of the window. We had spent the past few weeks in anticipation (and dread) for this very day. Kindergarten Orientation was a first for both of us, and we were a mixture of excitement and nervousness. My gut was beginning to make frightening noises that sounded a lot like complaints.

I pulled into the large parking lot of an even larger two story brick building, with a very impressive awning over the entrance made up of four brick pillars underneath a green pyramid roof. The cream mortar lines were clean and sharp, immediately giving away how new this building really was. We parked our little silver car between a shiny red Audi S8, and a pristine black Toyota Land Cruiser. As I walked toward the school hand in hand with my brave boy, I found myself hoping the veggie straws, juice boxes, and random socks strewn all over my car weren't very noticeable at a glance.

We stepped through the heavy doors to find a dim entrance with lots of friendly smiling faces in matching red t-shirts that read "GO TIGERS! MASON CREST ELEMENTARY". I looked around and spotted a busy sign-in table with name tags. Without being instructed, Izzy wrote in his name, peeled off the name tag, very carefully placed it on his lime green polo, and proceeded to tie his shoe. Watching how careful and intentional every action was, made my heart swell with love and pride for this little human. I knew he was ready for this next chapter in his life, and more importantly, so did he.

We walked around the corner to the large bright open room that was the cafeteria. In it were round foldable tables with eight round seats coming out of them like spider legs. There were many smaller tables set up along the wall directly to the left. These tables had more information for activities (boy/girl scouts, sports), bus rules and regulations, ESOL, PTO, and School Aged Child Care (SACC). As we went from table to table, it suddenly dawned on me how busy Izzy's life would get.

I looked around at all the rising kindergarteners who would become my son's peers. There were blonde braids, missing teeth, brunette pigtails, spiky gelled hair, headbands, and even a Mohawk (which I was very excited about). I reflected on how lucky we are to live in such a diverse community and was thrilled that Izzy would get to know all of these different cultures. Every little face I saw was experiencing life in their own particular way. Each child had a very unique set of parents, siblings,

relationships, likes, dislikes, and habits. It occurred to me then that each new friend he made would leave an impression on him. Whether positive or negative, he was now going to be influenced by outside perspectives and beliefs. This fact that had just thrilled me, suddenly terrified me, and I wondered if it was too late to escape.

A low polite voice came through the speakers asking everyone to sit down. It was Mr. Butler, a tall, slender, African American man, and one of three principals at Mason Crest. He offered all parents supervised play in the playground for their little ones. Izzy and I looked at each other and I could see he was hesitant. I smiled as genuinely as I could and told him to go have fun. I reassured him many times I would be right where he left me if he needed to find me, and that I would be right out as soon as this boring meeting was finished. He accepted these statements I made as fact, and hurried out of the cafeteria, his curly brown hair jumping up and down with him. It was all I could do not to sob hysterically. I just kept chanting "Not here, not here, not here" like it was some kind of life saving mantra.

As I shifted in my hard plastic seat to the PowerPoint presentation, I realized that the people standing in front of me would be in charge of my child's formal education. Standing up there they looked like regular people. There were seven women and only one man. Mr. Butler began the presentation by introducing himself and his fellow principals. He then passed the microphone to the first teacher up, Ms. Robertson.

Ms. Robertson was tall, with fair skin and long blond hair. She appeared to be just as excited as she was nervous while explaining what they would be teaching the Kindergarteners this year. Her blue eyes seemed to want to make eye contact with everyone as she spoke about how ready she was to start the new school year. The information seemed endless and each slide was just as important as the one before it. I tried to absorb as much information as possible but my brain felt like a sponge that had not been properly wrung before use. As time went on each speaker sounded genuine and excited, and I felt my spirit become lighter. Like this heavy burden I did not know I was bearing was suddenly light enough that I could sit up straight and take a deep breath. The entire 30 minutes I spent listening to their presentation felt like a roller coaster ride of emotions.

At the end of the presentation, I got up and followed the herd of parents to the outside playground. I hadn't realize it had been so cold in the air conditioned cafeteria until I stepped outside. The heat felt like a warm blanket I could take comfort in, instead of the wet sticky nuisance it had been earlier that day. The smell of fresh mulch, grass, and sweet honeysuckles was surprisingly nostalgic. I imagined my 5 year old self being thrilled at the sight of this playground. The large red and blue jungle gym included a plastic climbing wall, a jumping bridge, and 3 large slides. I noticed Izzy at the top of one of the slides, and could hear the static clinging to him as he reached the bottom. He walked over to me and surprised himself when he shocked my hand with his. He looked up at me with his large brown eyes for a second, before spilling over with laughter. He had clearly had a good time, much to my relief.

We raced back inside and followed the signs to all the stops on the tour. We hit the large bright gym that smelled of plastic and rubber, and had plenty of room for

cartwheels according to Izzy. The music room was about the size of a regular classroom with blue carpet and shelves lining the walls. Each shelf stored a different instrument such as xylophones, tambourines, drums, wooden blocks, recorders, and ukuleles to name a few. Izzy even had the courage to volunteer to sing and dance with other students. He kept looking over to me for reassurance, but he did that a little less throughout the day with each new activity. In the art room he chose a seat at a large square table where he proceeded to make that day's special project, a tiger mask.

As we walked into what would be his classroom, I was greeted by the smell of new supplies and fresh paper. I loved that brand new smell of beginnings and opportunities. This was the beginning of my son's journey. This is where he would start to shape his future, his potential, his education. As he looked around and found his name on his desk, hook, and cubby, I could see he felt he was already a part of this class. He sat next to a little boy named Sawyer, who would later become his best friend. The ease with which he spoke to him and other children around him gave me hope and surprisingly, courage.

I looked around the room, and for the first time really saw the other parents. Earlier in the day all I could see was how much older, wiser, and more put together they seemed to be. These were people that had probably planned to be parents, who had the means to provide for every possible want or desire. Their designer bags, shoes, and perfectly paired suits had intimidated me the entire day. I was lucky to live in such a great neighborhood, but I felt a little ashamed that I did not quite amount to what other parents appeared to be. Finally really looking at them I could see they were all just as nervous as I was. Everyone had that look of uncertainty, whether we really were making the best decisions for our children.

We left that day with a large packet of papers to review before school started, and a lot of excitement for this new adventure. Listening to him happily retell every new memory he had created, I was reminded of my job. Regardless of my fears and insecurities, I am to guide him through his own trials and tribulations. He is meant to make his own decisions, and I am meant to help him as much as he will let me. Whether that's answering any and all questions, not fighting his battles for him, or being an example to him; his life will be precisely that, his. I'm just lucky enough to be a part of it.

Jinghui Luo

The Sneaky Cat

Oil Paint

Fiction

Gage Henry

Reaches

The pod was ablaze, Dephil knew that much. Scorched plasteel pooled noxious smoke into the ceiling and he coughed. There was dark fluid on the wall. Hopefully not his. The shoulder restraints gave, gravity sliding him into the cracked monitors of the pod's central column. They flickered dwindling bars of oxygen as he heard a grunt to his right. Jenkins had met a hunk of shrapnel. Barse and Loraine struggled with the body before giving up. They passed under Dephil to join Rex and Kayla outside, each securing a helmet and quitting the pod.

Alien air flooded in, starving the man's lungs, but he soon found a helmet and joined the others. The pod's O2 tanks ignited. Dephil was glad to have made it out.

It had been a rare contract with a big score, big enough that they wouldn't need another one for a while. Halfway through the warp, they'd shorted out. And what else would emerge outside the windows of the Clover but a planet. Scanners indicated life. Enough money to buy each crew member a world if they could get the signal out. The scanners detected a hyper-magnetized core that CF-class thrusters could do little against, but it was too late.

Grouped up, they made a count of survivors. Comms were static. "Everyone okay?" they groaned halfheartedly. Smoke barreled from the wreck on the horizon. The cloud was radioactive. At least they knew where to meet.

Most of the metal instruments had died. Rex, toting a gun, grunted with the steel. As they walked, cracks rang from the west. The other groups had already begun to turn on each other for the score. Keep moving, they all thought. Miles later, they found debris – a convenient smoking cache. Another group found it too, just as the night came.

"Who shot?" they all wondered. No one had an answer.

The other group brought wounded: a man and a woman, he missing an arm and she mummified in gauze. The man had a twitch – early onset Trailblazer Syndrome. And she was in a coma. Oxygen was being wasted, but Rex wouldn't prescribe the bullets. And here they were, scrounging for whatever food the wall-mounted dispensers in the twisted scraps could supply.

Dephil drank that night. Portable airtight tents allotted it. He had thoughts of love that ended too soon, trivial to mankind and all too profound to the individual. He pondered what it meant to be human, and why he still fought to live. He shared his tent with Loraine.

Dephil was prodded awake. Lorey's face worried him. He rose, aching as she held onto him, and they listened to the panic outside. There was a sudden thump on their bubble. It was the co-captain Augustus.

look at our differences and attempt to solve them.

I made sure that there was an equal number of men and women on my panel for this very reason. I wanted to create a dialogue that was unbiased and true. There are ways that some choose to deal with oppression, and often, these ways include violence. It does not have to always be this way. The world has enough issues that are being resolved through violence. Gender equality should not be one of those issues. By that I mean, young women like Malala Yousafzai should not be shot in the head for going to school. Instead, young women like Malala should be encouraged to pursue higher education. They should be encouraged to become lawyers, doctors, engineers and presidents. The only way to achieve that reality is through changing the way society views women. And the only way society can change the way society looks at women is through communicating, debating, and having discussions. That is what I wanted to achieve through my panel, and I think I was quite successful.

"Dephil, we leave in five!"

It was immediate enough. They dressed shrouded in noise. Stepping outside, they at last met the commotion. It was the tumult of people who feared for their lives. Dephil left Lorey to compress the shelter as he caught up with Gus.

"What's going on?"

"Stone and Junior stayed up last night to look after the injured. Some of us got woken up, and now they're gone. Nobody's seen Stone, Junior or the other two since."

"Woken up?"

They'd arrived at a deflated tent. Gus walked around one side and held up the durable fabric for Dephil to see. He'd found his answer in the form of a gaping hole that revealed nothing but carnage inside the tent.

"Trailblazer?"

"The infection doesn't do this," Gus answered. "We thought, maybe, the local plants exaggerated the symptoms, even though it doesn't explain why all the actual bodies are missing. Could've been a parasite that one of the wounded caught. Zombie shit or something." Dephil gave him a look. "There's not much else to go off of! We started waking the others up when I saw… this." His boot lifted a limp flap of the ruined tent as Dephil squinted.

A print in the mud. Long, slender, like a naked foot. It wasn't too deep, but the claw held enough distinction to tell Dephil all he needed to know. He reeled back. The deduction wasn't hard to make. "Do the others know?"

"No," the co-captain preluded. "Dephil. We're not alone."

Brisk steps brought them closer and closer to the rising plumes in the distance. They all huffed as the metal in their suits tugged corebound, nullifying lighter-than-earth gravity.

"Where do you think they went?" Lorey whispered to Dephil.

"Hell if I know. Probably just wanted an early start to the ship. Maybe the new group were the ones who fired the shots yesterday and they're just picking us off."

"Sure makes more sense," she plotted. "But couldn't they just cut to the chase?"

"Not with Rex lugging that auto around."

"They could have one too."

"If they did, we'd know by now."

Dephil leaned over to Loraine, cautious of the others. "Tell Rex to keep an eye out. Next time we stop, I'm gonna have a little chat with Gus."

The group set down on the massive roots of the trees, visors foggy top to bottom, the column of smoke within a few miles. Dephil trudged to the back of the group in search of their co-captain. He found Kayla.

"You seen Gus?"

Kayla stopped sucking on her hydrating vent. "That way. Probably went to clear his waste packets." Dephil began in the direction indicated. "Ever heard of privacy?" she hollered after him.

Clambering over roots and brush, Dephil spotted Gus. It was unusually dark under this part of the canopy, but between two huge roots he saw the silhouette. "Gus, we need to talk."

It turned.

He fell back. Through his cloudy helmet pierced the white glint of two huge eyes. Its crooked limbs unfurled, maintaining eye contact. Dephil scrambled, turning to run. He heard it behind him, clicking. Warbling. The others saw him break through the treeline, running toward them. By the time he stopped they were on their feet.

"We have to get to the ship!"

"Dephil, what's —"

"We need to get the fuck out of here! Now!"

"What happened?" one of them shouted.

"No time! We have to go!" He took Loraine by the shoulders, "Where's Rex?"

That was when the gunshots started. The cracking booms fired off in rapid succession nearby. The stream didn't end. Rex was emptying his clip on something. They heard an unintelligible holler as one of the women from the party shrieked, feet disappearing into the brush while she was dragged away.

Scattering like ants, most broke toward the direction of the ship.

Nighttime had arrived by the time Dephil and Lorey found the crashed vessel. Some had gone ahead, some had fallen behind. None of them knew how many were left. On this planet, they were all but beyond the reaches of hope.

Hoisting each other up the hull of the wreckage, the two found themselves facing an open corridor. The darkness inside was suffocating. They crept along the bowels of the Maintenance deck, finding a stash of weapons that had taken their leave from an airduct panel. There was an elevator shaft nearby with no cab.

Coolant fluid continued to drain from somewhere further back in the ship, creating a pool at the end of the corridor. The stairway would be on the other side. Lorey took Dephil's gun as he submerged and returned a few moments later. All clear. Together, they dove.

Two glints caught Dephil's attention as they swam. He couldn't turn fast enough. A claw met his suit, prompting blood. He panicked and fired. Two rounds missed, with

the third eliciting a muffled screech instead of another claw disemboweling him. It retreated.

They emerged, Lorey carrying him. Dephil's midsection turned red. There was oxygen in this part of the ship. Taking off their helmets, she set him down and stapled him. The suit was taped. She hoped it would be enough. Weapons primed, they made it to the central comms station. The emergency beacon sat pristinely on the wall.

"If this works," Lorey began, setting the coordinates, "we can get the fuck out of __"

A click could be heard as Dephil pressed the barrel into her back. "Go on. Finish up."

"So. That's how it is."

"Drop it!" A gruff voice came from the hallway. It was Rex, auto pointed. Dephil obeyed, setting his weapon down and kicking it. "You wanted the planet for yourself."

Two glints caught Dephil's attention as he crouched.

The new shape in the hallway illuminated with the sparks of torn cables. Rex barely had time to react before it was upon him. He screamed as Loraine and Dephil leapt and fought for the gun.

The emergency team arrived in shock. The smoking plumes had been visible planetside. Their thrusters were just enough to resist the core. When they finally reached the beacon, there were two bodies lying on the floor with… something else.

"About damn time."

Poetry

John Mulquin

The Real MVP

The odds were stacked against us
Single mom, two boys by the age of twenty-one
Healthy but homeless, not hopeless
Thank you for saving my life
We weren't supposed to be here

You kept us off the streets
You fed us first, while your stomach rumbled
You sacrificed dancing and dating,
Numerous struggles, and sleepless nights
We weren't supposed to be here

You recognized our potential
Extra workouts in the middle of the night;
Push-ups, sit-ups, running hills
Because you saw greatness ahead
We weren't supposed to be here

You made us believe
You took us to church, asking God for guts, guidance
Hard work is worthy of our dreams
We fell, but we are still standing
We weren't supposed to be here

What brought us here?
Constant desire, discipline, dedication
We worked for cause, not applause
We lived without excuses
We weren't supposed to be here

College bound on a full ride
NBA draft at the age of 18
MVP Player of the year 2014
Giving back to College Track
We weren't supposed to be here

We weren't supposed to be here, but we made it
I love you Mom, you are THE REAL MVP!

Sydney Strickland

Peacocky

Ink Pen

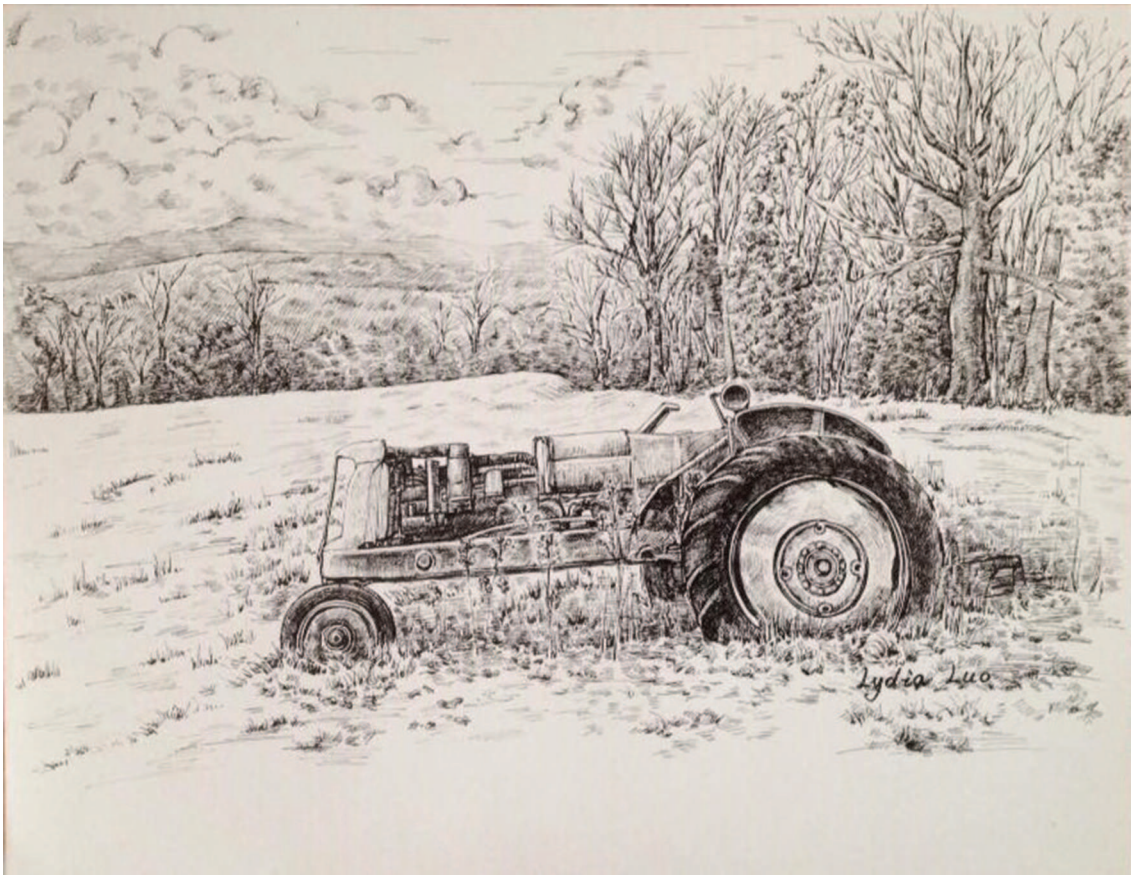
Sydney Strickland

Bird of a Feather

Ink Pen

Jinghui Luo

Old Trucks and Mountains



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